



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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PASSPORT DENIAL PROGRAM WORKS FOR KIDS *TENNESSEE'S CHILD SUPPORT COLLECTIONS CONTINUE TO RISE*

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Parents that owe more than \$5,000 in back child support will not be allowed to leave the country until they pay up. So far this year, Tennessee has collected more than \$300,000 through the Passport Denial Program, which is part of the Federal Offset Program. Once the parent pays their overdue support, they are allowed to get a passport.

A middle Tennessee mother of two recently received \$228,000 in overdue child support after the children's father, who lives in California, was denied his request for a passport. Tennessee works with other states and the U.S. State Department to help recover delinquent child support through the program. Federal law prohibits the department from releasing names of those involved in child-support cases.

The offset programs help identify and match delinquent parents when they apply for or try to renew a passport or receive a tax refund, for example. So far this calendar year, Tennessee has collected \$30.2 million through these programs.

"The Federal Offset Programs are excellent tools for us to use in our efforts to help children who are owed, but are not receiving, their court-ordered support," said Human Services Commissioner Gina Lodge. "It is unacceptable for any parent to shirk these responsibilities."

The Department of Human Services continues to see increases in its child support collections. More than \$38 million were collected for children in June. Human Services' Child Support Division and its offices across the state have increased collections so far this state fiscal year by 14 percent over last state fiscal year. From July 2003 through June 2004, more than \$412 million in child support payments were collected. During that same period last year, \$362 million in payments were collected.

In addition to the Offset Programs, the Department uses enforcement tools such as administrative wage assignments, liens and license revocation to collect support.

Further information: The Child Support Program at the state Department of Human Services:

<http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/child-support.htm>

The Federal Offset Program: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/newhire/fop/fop.htm>

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